

APPENDIX F

State Emblems, Insignia, Song, and Poet Laureate

The State Emblems

In the enactment of the laws designating a State Flag, Animal, Bird, Tree, Flower, Fish, Rock, Mineral, Colors, Nickname, and Song, etc., California's Legislature has proved that sentiment may be included in prosaic law. The Bear Flag is emblematic of California's romantic past; the valley quail and the golden trout represent her abundance of wild game and fish; while the redwood and golden poppy are in recognition of the beauty of her trees and flowers; serpentine and gold suggest the richness and variety of her natural resources. The State Colors of blue and gold depict the azure skies and precious California metal; the song "I Love You, California" portrays the regard Californians hold for their native state.

State Animal

Until it became extinct in 1922, the California grizzly bear (*Ursus californicus*) played an important part in the early period of the state. Avidly hunted and at the same time mightily respected by the early rancheros, it became the most arresting symbol on the flag raised in independence at Sonoma in 1846. The Native Sons of the Golden West used the bear as an emblem as early as 1875.

Long identified with the University of California, the California grizzly bear was officially designated the State Animal in 1953.¹

State Bird

Widely distributed throughout the state, the California valley quail (*Lophortyx californica*) is a fine game bird especially noted for its hardihood and adaptability.

A plump, gray-colored bird, it is somewhat smaller than a pigeon. Outstanding features include a black plume on top of the head, curving downward, and a black bib with a white stripe under the beak. The birds flock together in numbers ranging from a few to 60 or more in the fall and winter months, but in the spring break up into pairs. They nest in hollows scratched in the ground and concealed by foliage, and their eggs, 6 to 28 in number, are creamy white and thickly spotted with golden brown.

A large number of societies and clubs voted to determine the selection of an official bird, and the California valley quail was found to be the popular choice. Official recognition followed when the Legislature named it the State Bird and avifaunal emblem in 1931.²

¹ Government Code, Section 425.

² Government Code, Section 423.

State Colors

In 1951, the Legislature adopted the combination of blue and gold (Yale blue and golden yellow) as the official State Colors.³ These colors frequently appear on formal resolutions of the Legislature and official documents of the Secretary of State. They are also the colors of the University of California.

State Fish

The golden trout (*Salmo aqua-bonita*) is sparsely distributed in the lakes and streams of the High Sierra. Originally it was isolated in a few small tributaries of upper Little Kern and South Fork of the Kern River, including a rocky stream south of Sequoia National Park once called Volcano Creek but now renamed Golden Trout Creek. The first transplant of the golden trout occurred in 1876 from the coffeepot of shepherders at Cottonwood Creek, Inyo County. Stock originating from this transplanted source is now used by the Department of Fish and Game for producing fingerling fish used in stocking other high streams and lakes. Some fish were transplanted to other states until 1939 when the California Legislature passed a law prohibiting transportation of eggs and fry out of the state.

For most of the year, the golden trout lives beneath ice as spring arrives late high in the mountains and their summer is brief. The growing season being very short, the golden trout rarely exceeds one foot in length, particularly in streams.

The golden trout, native only to California, is considered to be the most beautiful of freshwater fish with its profusion of vivid colors.

The *Salmo aqua-bonita* was designated the official State Fish by the Legislature of 1947.⁴

State Flag

It is generally accepted that the "Bear Flag" was raised over Sonoma on June 14, 1846. This banner was carried by a small number of disgruntled Americans living in the north central part of California, who marched on that town and, in friendly fashion, made a prisoner of Mariano G. Vallejo, the Mexican commandant. A member of the group, William B. Ide, issued what became known as Ide's Proclamation, which declared California to be a Republic independent of Mexico.

William L. Todd, credited with the actual making of the original flag, wrote that a piece of new unbleached cotton domestic with four-inch stripes of red flannel attached to its lower side was used, that a star was placed in the upper left-hand corner of the flag, and a grizzly bear passant was placed in the center. Beneath the bear were the words "California Republic."

³ *Government Code*, Section 424.

⁴ *Statutes of 1947*, Resolution Chapter 90.

The color of the flag—white—symbolizes purity, and the red in the star and bar, courage. The grizzly bear, regarded as the possessor of great strength, signifies this quality. The star denotes sovereignty, emulating the Lone Star of Texas.



The original Bear Flag was preserved for many years in the offices of the Society of California Pioneers at San Francisco, but was destroyed in the earthquake and fire of 1906.

In 1911, the Legislature adopted the Bear Flag as the State Flag of California.⁵

State Flower

The golden poppy, also known as the flame flower, *la amapola*, and *copa de oro* (cup of gold) is said to be found blooming somewhere in California throughout the year.

The botanical name, *Eschscholtzia californica*, was given to this beautiful wildflower by Adelbert von Chamisso, a naturalist and member of the Royal Prussian Academy of Sciences. Chamisso was a member of a three-year scientific expedition under the patronage of Count Romanzoff, ex-Chancellor of the Russian Empire. He chose *Eschscholtzia* to honor Johann Friedrich Eschscholtz, his good friend and entomologist and surgeon of the expedition, and *californica* for the place of origin. The expedition dropped anchor in the harbor of San Francisco in 1816, surrounded by hills of the golden flowers.

⁵ *Statutes of 1911*, Chapter 9. See *Government Code*, Section 420. "This bill sets forth in the statutes a legal description of the Bear Flag of the State of California. There never has been legislative determination of the specifications for the Bear Flag. Each manufacturer uses his own idea as to how the Flag should look. As a result, there are State Flags with bears that sometimes look like hogs, sometimes like wolves and sometimes like a combination of both. This bill will prescribe specifically how the bear shall be portrayed and also the specific colors of the Flag which shall be included in Flags manufactured hereafter.

"The bill also establishes the California grizzly bear (*Ursus californicus*) as the State Animal. The bill also sets forth the botanical names of the two species of redwoods (*Sequoia sempervirens*, *Sequoia gigantea*) which shall be considered the official State Tree."—Statement by Mr. Charles Edward Chapel relative to Senate Bill No. 1014, *Journal of the Assembly*, June 2, 1953, p. 4990.

In early days the golden poppy grew in great profusion the length and breadth of California, and it is said that some of the rolling foothills, aglow with their golden bloom, served as beacons to ships far out at sea. This spectacle so fired the imaginations of the sailors on the ships that they nicknamed the country "La Tierra del Fuego" or "Land of Fire."⁶

The golden poppy was officially adopted as the State Flower by the Legislature in 1903.⁷

State Motto and Official Nickname

The official state motto, "Eureka", appears at the top of the Great Seal of the State.⁸ It is from the Greek word meaning "I have found it."

California has always been synonymous with gold. *Las Sergas de Esplandian*, de Montalvo's 16th century novel, describes an island, "California", on which there was no metal but gold. In 1846, John C. Fremont named the entrance to San Francisco Bay *Chrysopylae*⁹ (Golden Gate) after the manner of Byzantium's *Chrysoceras* (Golden Horn). Gold, first discovered in southern California in 1841, brought renown to the state with the famous discovery by James Wilson Marshall at Coloma in 1848. California's official nickname is "*The Golden State*".¹⁰ This appellation has long been a popular designation, especially appreciated in the spring when the fields are covered with a profusion of golden poppies.

State Song

California's official State Song is "I Love You, California", written by F. B. Silverwood, a Los Angeles merchant. The music was composed by A. F. Frankenstein, also of Los Angeles. The song was publicly introduced by Mary Garden in 1913. It was the official song of the San Francisco and San Diego Expositions of 1915, and it was played aboard the first ship to go through the Panama Canal.

It was not given official recognition by the state, however, until 1951, when a resolution designating it as California's State Song was adopted by both houses of the Legislature.¹¹ All royalties from the song have been given to various charitable agencies.

State Tree

Common in the geologic past throughout much of the northern hemisphere, the California redwood has now reached its last stand on the Pacific Coast, where many of the finest groves are protected in state and national parks and forests. Except for a small area in Oregon, forests of these giant trees exist nowhere outside California.

⁶ *California Blue Book* 1958, p. 25.

⁷ *Government Code*, Section 421.

⁸ *Government Code*, Section 420.5.

⁹ Fremont, J. C., *Geographical Memoir Upon Upper California in Illustration of His Map of Oregon and California*, Washington, 1848, U.S. Senate, 30th Congress, 1st Session, Misc. No. 148.

¹⁰ *Government Code*, Section 420.75.

¹¹ *Statutes of 1951*, Resolution Chapter 87. The words and music of the song were printed in the *Journal of the Assembly*, April 24, 1951, pp. 3404-3407.

There are two species: The Sierra Redwood (*Sequoia gigantea*) is to be found in the Sierra Nevada mountain region, and the Coast Redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*) grows in the mountains and valleys along the central and northern coast of California and the southern coastal edge of Oregon.

The maximum recorded height of the redwood is 364 feet; circumference, 101 feet; diameter, 36½ feet. The General Sherman Redwood in Sequoia National Park, with an estimated age of between 3,000 and 4,000 years, is 272 feet tall. The General Grant Tree, with a base diameter of 35 feet and a height of 267 feet, is known as "The Nation's Christmas Tree."

Both species of the California redwood were designated as the State Tree by the Legislature in 1937.¹²

Other Emblems

In recent years, numerous proposals have been made to identify, publicize and protect California's prominent natural endowments. Those which have achieved official rank are listed below in line of recognition by the Legislature.

State Mineral

Gold was designated as the State Mineral by legislation in 1965.¹³ More has been produced by this state than any other in the Union. Native gold is widely distributed in California, having been found in every county, occurring as free flakes or nuggets in sand and gravel, or in quartz veins. It is often found in association with copper and lead deposits. The largest nugget found to date in California was in 1854 at Carson Hill.

State Rock

Serpentine, designated officially in 1965, is found in great abundance in the Coast Range from Del Norte County to San Diego County, and on the western slope of the Sierra Nevadas. It ranges in color from light green to greenish black and has a waxy feeling and appearance. Some commercial quality serpentine is mined in California as asbestos.¹⁴

State Gemstone

Benitoite is designated as the official gemstone. Sometimes called the "blue diamond," it was first discovered at the headwaters of the San Benito River, deriving its name therefrom. The gem is extremely rare and ranges in coloration from a light transparent blue to dark, vivid sapphire blue, and occasionally it is found in a violet shade.¹⁵

¹² *Government Code*, Section 422.

¹³ *Government Code*, Section 425.1.

¹⁴ *Government Code*, Section 425.2.

¹⁵ *Government Code*, Section 425.3.

State Reptile

The Desert Tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*) is indigenous to the southeastern desert areas of California. The color of the tortoise ranges from a yellowish brown to dark brown; they are of a robust build and have a high, arched upper shell. The average adult attains a shell size of about 10 to 12 inches in length.

There are no records of the longevity of the desert tortoise but turtles generally live longer than any other vertebrate, including humans. Tortoises are not plentiful and are gradually disappearing. In California they are now protected; it is illegal to remove them from their native area. In 1972, the California Legislature adopted the desert tortoise as the official State Reptile.¹⁶

State Insect

The California Dog-face Butterfly (*Zerene eurydice*) officially designated as the State Insect in 1972, is strictly a native California butterfly. It inhabits the lower mountain area from the Mexican border north to the San Francisco Bay region. It is particularly common in the San Bernardino Mountains. The male is orange and black in color with a striking design on the upper wing; the female is yellow-orange in color with a small black dot on the upper wing.¹⁷

State Fossil

The Sabre-tooth Cat was adopted by the Legislature in 1973 as the official State Fossil.¹⁸ Fossil bones of this large cat have been found in abundance preserved in the tar pits of Rancho La Brea in Los Angeles.

A muscular, short-limbed cat with a stubby tail, *Smilodon californicus* was more massive than the modern lion. It had immense upper canine teeth up to 20 cm. long which were probably used for slashing, stabbing attacks on its prey.

The cat became extinct during the Pleistocene epoch at about the same time that the mastodon disappeared.

State Marine Mammal

The California Gray Whale (*Eschrichtius robustus*) was adopted by the Legislature as the State Marine Mammal in 1975.¹⁹ Measuring 35 to 50 feet in length and around 20 to 40 tons in weight, it is identified by its mottled gray color and low hump in place of a dorsal fin.

The Gray Whale feeds mainly on small crustaceans along the ocean bottom in the western Bering Sea where they spend the summer. From December through February, the California Gray Whale can be seen traveling southward in small groups along the California coast on their way to the bays and lagoons of

¹⁶ Government Code, Section 422.5.

¹⁷ Government Code, Section 424.5.

¹⁸ Government Code, Section 425.7.

¹⁹ Government Code, Section 425.5.

Baja California where mating occurs and the females calve. In March and April, they once again travel north following the shoreline. The whales cover approximately 6,000 to 7,000 miles each way. It is believed that memory and vision aid them on their long migration.

Poet Laureate

The honorary title of Poet Laureate was apparently first used in England during the Middle Ages. However, there does not appear to be any authentic record of the origin of the office.

The degree of Poet Laureate was awarded to those who were skilled in verse, and, in later times, the custom arose of crowning distinguished men of letters with the title.

In the history of California, there have been but five persons upon whom the Legislature has conferred the honorary title of Poet Laureate of California.

Ina Coolbrith, California's first Poet Laureate, was named "The Loved Laurel Crowned Poet of California" by the Legislature of 1919,²⁰ and held the title until her death in 1928.

Henry Meade Bland, named "The Laurel Crowned Poet of California" by the 1929 Legislature,²¹ held the title until his death in 1931, just two years later.

In 1933, the Legislature designated John Steven McGroarty as "Poet Laureate of California,"²² which title he held until his death in 1944.

Gordon W. Norris was appointed by the Legislature in 1953²³ and served until his death on December 18, 1961.

The present Poet Laureate, the Honorable Charles Garrigus, was appointed by the Legislature in March 1966.²⁴ Mr. Garrigus' appointment is unique, as he is the first Poet Laureate ever appointed who has also served as a Member of the State Legislature.

²⁰ *Statutes of 1919*, Resolution Chapter 51.

²¹ *Statutes of 1929*, Resolution Chapter 23.

²² *Statutes of 1933*, Resolution Chapter 105.

²³ *Statutes of 1953*, Resolution Chapter 210.

²⁴ *Statutes of 1966*, Resolution Chapter 8.

